for development of tourism in the North East States;

(b) how long the restriction of entry to foreigners to the North East Region will be allowed to continue; and

(c) whether Government have any plan to set up National Tourist Centres in the States' bordering the North East States like that of Zuko Valley of Manipur bordering Nagaland?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRI OMAK APANG): (a) To develop tourism in the North East region the Ministry of Tourism had set up a Task Force which has given a number of recommendations which include removal of entry restrictions, upgradation of Guwahati airport, development of inter water transport for tourists, development of certain road segments as National Highways and development of tourism infrastructure in places of major tourist attraction. The Ministry of Tourism also provides central financial assistance to each of the North Eastern States every year.

(b) The Restricted Area Permit/Protected Area Permit System is reviewed from time to time by Government and relaxations are notified.

(c) Setting up of tourist centres is primarily considered and taken up by the State Governments. However, Central Financial Assistance is provided by Ministry of Tourism on receipt of project proposals and availability of funds.

Promotion of tourism in Ninth Plan

155. SHRI GOVINDRAM MIRI: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to adopt a policy to promote tourism in the country during the Ninth Plan;

(b) if so, whether any special provisions have been made under the new policy to attract foreign tourists in the country;

(c) the prime objective of the Government in formulating policy to promote tourism; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRI OMAK APANG): (a) and (b) Yes Sir. The policy of the Government is to promote and develop tourism as a joint effort of all the agencies concerned including Central Government, State Government and the Private Sector. As a part of the Policy the Ministry of Tourism provides financial assistance to State Governments for the development of tourism infrastructure. Incentives are also provided to the Private Sector for attracting investment in the Tourism Sector.

(c) and (d) The prime objective of Government in formulating a policy to promote tourism is to provide a policy direction and to indicate the thrust areas for tourism development in a sustained and appropriate manner.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The House is adjourned till 11 o'clock tomorrow.

The House then adjourned at twelve minutes past eleven of the clock till eleven of the clock on Wedenesday, the 24th February, 1999.

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